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ECONOMICS SEMINAR

THE I. W. W. IN THE LUMBER INDUSTRY

BY JAMES ROWAN

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THE I. W. W. IN THE LUMBER INDUSTRY

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CHAPTER I

The Monopoly of the Lumber Trust

The lumber industry of the United States presents a good example of trustification. Practically all the timberlands are owned or controlled by that great Rockefeller-Weyerhauser combination of capital known as the Lumber Trust. Wherever we find timberlands, there we find the Lumber Trust the ruling power, controlling not only the industry, but also the local, and sometimes the State machinery of government, while it's powerful and corrupt influences at the National Capital is well known.

The following extract from an article by Louis F. Post, Assistant Secretary of Labor, in the "Public" of June 7th, 1919, will give some idea of the degree of monopoly that exists in the lumber industry. The statistics given are taken from a report made to President Taft by the then Commissioner of Corporations, the Honorable Herbert Knox Smith. It may be found in the published documents of the United States Department of Commerce (Bureau of Corporations) under the title "The Lumber Industry—Part 1, Standing Timber."

"Some six or seven years ago, the facts about the privately monopolized natural resource known as 'Standing Timber' tracts, were officially obtained. Even at that time there was, as the official report phrased it, 'a dominating control of our standing timber in a comparatively few enormous holdings steadily tending towards the control of the lumber industry.'

"The value of the standing timber when these signicant facts were officially obtained, had increased more then ten-fold, twenty-fold, and even fifty-fold within a

16774

few years—the value, that is, the privilege of control in the use of the timber in industry.

"In the Southern pine region, the prices had risen from a dollar or two an acre to $60.00. For other regions, one of three specific tracts had risen from $24,000 to $153,000, another from $10,000 to $124,000, and the third from $23,000 to $5,200,000.

"The commercial value of the privately owned standing timber in the United States at that time was estimated by the official report referred to, as at least six billion dollars—about $60 for every inhabitant. But this burden of $60 per capita, as a penalty upon the people for the use of our natural resources, and an unearned profit for the monopolists, is not all. 'Ultimately,' as the report went on to say, 'the consuming public will have to pay such prices for lumber as will give this timber a far greater value.'

" 'Such concentration in standing timber, if permitted to continue and increase' to quote further from that official report 'makes probable a final central control of the whole lumber industry.'

"Now notice the amazing degree of monopolistic concentration which that official investigation of a few years ago showed.

"Ten monopoly groups, aggregating only one thousand, eight hundred and two holders, monopolized one thousand, two hundred and eight billion eight hundred million (1,208,800,000,000) board feet of standing timber—each a foot square and an inch thick. These figures are so stupendous that they are meaningless without a hackneyed device to bring their meaning home. These one thousand, eight hundred and two timber business monopolists held enough standing timber, an indispensable natural resource, to yield the planks necessary (over and above manufacturing wastage) to make a floating bridge more than two feet thick and more than five miles

wide from New York to Liverpool. It would supply one inch planks for a roof over France, Germany and Italy. It would be enough to build a fence eleven miles high along our entire coast line. All monopolized by one thousand, eight hundred and two holders, or interests more or less interlocked. One of those interests—a grant of only three holders—monopolized at that time two hundred and thirty-seven billion, five hundred million (237,500,000,000) feet, which would make a column one foot square and three million miles high. Although controlled by only three holders, that interest comprised over eight per cent of all the standing timber in the United States at that time. But these timber figures relate to only one phase of this particular form of natural resource monopoly. 'When the timber has been cut, the land remains,' says the official report. The report then continues, 'there has been created, therefore, not only the frame work of an enormous timber monopoly, but also an equally sinister land concentration in extensive sections which involves also a great wealth in minerals; another highly important item of our natural resources. In Florida, for instance, as stated in the same report, three holders had four million, two hundred thousand acres, and the largest timber holder in Florida appeared to hold 'over sixteen million, nine hundred and ninety thousand acres—about one-eight of the land area of the state.'"

Just how the lumber barons obtained possession of this great natural resource is a story which would make interesting reading, but would take too much space in a pamphlet of this nature. It is sufficient to say that in its outstanding features the history of the Lumber Trust is no different from that of all other great combinations of wealth. Intrigue, fraud, bribery, corruption, legal chicanery, violence and murder were freely used by these "respectable" and "patriotic" gentlemen, to ac-

complish their purpose of stealing the natural resources of the country; while the editorial prostitutes of the kept press held them up to the toiling mutlitude as brilliant examples of what can be accomplished by honesty, industry, and conscientious attention to business.

CHAPTER II

The Lumber Trust Autocracy Over Labor

The Lumber Trust we may consider as the One Big Union of the bosses in the lumber industry. We find the lumber companies closely and efficiently organized, with tremendous power and fabulous wealth; while among the workers in the lumber industry there was until lately an almost complete lack of organization. As a class they were lacking in power and reduced to a state of economic dependence and servitude.

In the lumber industry there are two classes of workers, those who work in the woods and those who work in the saw mills.

In a typical saw mill town, industrial fuedalism exists in it's worst form. The lumber company by reason of it's economic control, is the one supreme power. Usually the local political office holders are either employes of the company, or are economically dependent on it in some way, and thus completely under it's control. The entire life of the community revolves around the saw mill. The workers in the saw mill live in company owned houses, or board at the company boarding house. They trade at the company store; their children go to a company controlled school; when they are sick they go to the company hospital, or are treated by the company doctor. When they are dead they are buried in the company cemetery, and their souls are saved by a company preacher.

In large lumber centers, where there are a number of saw mills, the companies do not maintain their own stores, and in some ways there is a little freedom.

As a rule about half of the saw mill workers are men with families. The companies usually prefer this kind of employe, as a man burdened with the responsi-

bilities of family life takes his job more seriously, works more steadily, and is less apt to exhibit those admirable, —but to the bosses undesirable—qualities of independence and rebellion than the unencumbered migratory worker.

Long hours and low wages prevailed in the saw mills. Ten hours was the work day. With the exception of head sawyers, saw filers and a few others the saw mill workers were paid just enough to enable them to maintain their existence. The constantly rising cost of living made the life of the saw mill worker a perpetual struggle to make ends meet—perpetual because the ends refused to meet.

Saw mill work is monotonous and uninteresting. Like all machine tenders, the saw mill worker is reduced to a mere automaton. The pace is set by machinery speeded up to the limit of human endurance. The day's work consists of a continuous repetition of the same motions, at top speed. The work of saw mill employes is also exceedingly dangerous. Few men who have worked as sawyers for any length of time, are possessed of a sound pair of hands, and many have lost one or more of their fingers. Often it is a whole hand. Most of the other jobs in a saw mill are equally dangerous. A single misstep or a slip would mean death or mutilation in the whirling, unguarded machinery.

Accidents are frequent. Most of these happen in the last hour of the work day, which proves that long hours of exhausting work cause a man to lose his quickness, alertness, and accurate co-ordination of hand and eye. Statistics show that, other things being equal, accidents are more common on ten hour than on eight hour jobs.

The lumber companies have always bitterly opposed organization among their employes. In the lumber towns the company spotters, the stoolpigeon, and the spy are always in evidence, and on the alert to win the favor

of the company officials by reporting any union activity. If an employe of a lumber company is suspected of being an agitator, or of belonging to a Union, he at once becomes a marked man, and soon finds himself out of a job and blacklisted.

If a saw mill worker is submissive, and subordinates his manhood and sacrifices his independence to the will of the company, he is rewarded by a life of grinding poverty, hopeless drudgery, and a condition of economic dependence and insecurity. If he asserts his manhood, he faces discharge and the blacklist, which, if he is a married man, means the breaking up of his home, and separation from wife and children.

Different methods of logging are used in different parts of the country. The western part of Washington, Oregon and California is known as the long log country. Eastern Washington and Oregon, Northern Idaho, Western Montana, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan are known as the short log country.

Conditions in the lumber camps were no better than in the saw mill towns. With few exceptions the work day was ten hours, and in addition to this the men had to walk long distances to and from work. Considering the long hours and the hard and dangerous nature of the work, the wages were miserably small. The camps, especially in the short log country, were relics of barbarism —more like cattle pens than the habitations of civilized men in the twentieth century. The bunk houses were dirty, unsanitary, and overcrowded, the men being packed into double bunks, built in two tiers, one above the other. The companies furnished neither mattresses nor bed clothing, thus forcing the men to furnish their own blankets. No provision was made for ventilation and when all bunks were full, the amount of air space per man was less than one-fourth of the minimum specified by the gov-

ernment health authorities. There were no drying rooms in the camps. The only place to dry clothing was around the stove in the bunk house, and the steam and odor from these wet clothes, added to the impurities of the stagnant air. As a rule the lighting of the bunk houses was so poor that it was almost impossible to read. There were no baths in the camps, neither were there any facilities for washing clothes.

In most lumber camps the food was fairly substantial and plentiful as was necessary to enable the men to endure the long hours and hard work; but this was not always the case, and in some camps, especially in hard winters when men were plentiful, the food was both insufficient in quantity and of the poorest quality.

There was no sanitary method of disposing of garbage in the camps. It was usually dumped just outside the cook house door. In hot weather these garbage piles rotted and stank and formed an ideal breeding place for swarms of flies. Another unsanitary feature of the camps was the existence of dry, open toilets a short distance from the cook houses.

In the long log country, conditions were somewhat better. The bunk houses were larger, cleaner and better ventilated. There were no double bunks. In most camps springs and mattresses were furnished, and in a few places, after the strike of 1913, shower baths were installed.

Every man was charged a hospital fee of one dollar per month. This was deducted from the wages and was supposed to be used for the maintainance of hospitals for the benefit of the men in case of sickness or accident. In most cases contracts were made with hospital associations but these arrangements were far from satisfactory. In these hospitals lumberjacks were looked upon as paupers and were usually treated with a neglect noth-

ing short of criminal. The main object was to get them out of the hospital with as little trouble and expense as possible. In some places men received fairly decent treatment but these were the exception. In providing hospital treatment economy, not the welfare of the men, was the main consideration. No treatment was given for any chronic disease and on the hospital tickets it was distinctly specified that no medical attention would be given except for accidents sustained, or disease contracted, while actually in the employ of the company. A list of diseases for which no treatment would be given was printed on the tickets, and this list contained all the diseases a lumberjack was ever likely to get. In some places a joint use was made of hospitals by lumber companies and railroads. The railroad men received far better treatment than the lumberjacks. The railroad men were organized and the lumberjacks were not and the better treatment of the railroad workers was a tribute to the power of unionism.

Some of the lumber companies maintained their own hospitals and in these, in conformity with the rules of "good business," cheapness and economy were the main consideration. Most of them were lacking in equipment and often incompetent doctors and nurses were employed. The lumberjacks had paid many times over for these hospitals, yet they received less consideration than charity patients. Whether a "timberbeast" lived or died, was of little concern to the company doctors. All they cared was to get him off their hands as quickly as possible, whether alive or dead made little difference. Often a lumberjack would go into one of these hospitals with some comparatively slight injury, such as a broken leg, which by skillful and conscientious treatment could have been completely cured in a few weeks, only to be turned out a permanent cripple. Many a formerly able-bodied man

is now dragging thru life, a hopeless cripple, as a result of the criminal and brutal neglect received in these hospitals. It is bad enough to rob and exploit strong and healthy men but, for the sake of a few paltry dollars, the ghoulish greed of the Lumber Trust did not scruple to rob sick and injured men of their chance of health or life.

As the lumber companies furnished no bedding in the camps, each man had to furnish his own. This was not only an added expense, but forced a man to carry his bed on his back when looking for a job, which was a great and unnecessary waste of energy. At one time a law was passed in Montana, prohibiting the carrying of blankets in that state on the ground that it caused the spread of disease. This law was never enforced for it would have compelled the employers to furnish bedding and that would not have been profitable.

Besides being robbed and exploited on the job the lumber workers were subjected to the petty graft of the employment agents who infect every city and make a business of recruiting men and shipping them out to the job. These petty grafters who fleeced the workers by making them pay for the privilege of being skinned by the big grafters had, in many places, a practical monopoly on the jobs, exacting tribute from all in search of work. They practiced the meanest and most contemptible kind of graft—not only robbing workers, but workers who could least affort to be robbed—the unemployed. The usual price a man had to pay for a job was one dollar but in slack times when jobs were scarce these parasites took advantage of the necessity of the workers and extorted a much higher price, often selling jobs to the highest bidder. Not only were men forced to pay for the right to work, but the most brazen frauds were practiced, especially on new arrivals from the farming districts and from other countries. It was a common occurrence for

a man to buy a job and pay his fare to some distant place, only to find that there was no job there. The law offered no protection to the victims of these sharks as they usually "stood in" with the local authorities, and the migratory workers were regarded as their legitimate prey.

Bosses and employment agents worked in collusion to skin the workers. In many camps and mills a man could not get a job unless he had a ticket from an employment office. Often a foreman would have an agreement with one or more of these sharks for a division of their graft and its increase, by which they would keep shipping him men, and he would keep discharging them, thus giving rise to what is known as the "three gang system," that is, one gang coming, one gang working on the job, and the third gang going back to town to buy more jobs.

At one time this abuse became so glaring that the legislature of the state of Washington passed a law forbidding employment agents to charge for jobs. But this law did not abate the evil in the least. Most of the sharks were small store keepers, poolroom or soft drink joint proprietors, or worked in conjunction with other small business men and instead or charging a man direct for a job, they forced him to hand over several dollars, ostensibly for clothes, blankets, or cheap, worthless jewelry, but in reality for the job. This law only made it worse for the workers, as it forced them to pay more for jobs and if a man, after making the required purchases, was sent to a place where there was no job, he had not even his former slim chance to get his money back as he was not supposed to have paid for the job at all. This law was afterwards declared unconstitutional but it made little difference for the robbery of the sharks continued unchecked, regardless of whether or not the law remained on the statute books.

CHAPTER III

The One Big Union of the Workers Versus The One Big Union of the Bosses

Let us investigate the causes of the miserable condition of the lumber workers. We find that the lumber companies are in business for one purpose—to make profits. They care nothing about the welfare of the workers; that is none of their business. They do not care how rotten conditions are in the camps as long as the men are able to do their work. To them it is immaterial how many men die from disease or accident, so long as they are able to get others to take their places. The longer the hours, the lower the wages, the harder the work and the more inhuman the conditions, the bigger the profits of the companies.

On the other hand the object of the workers is to make a living. They care nothing about the profits of the employers. They want to make as good a living as possible, and to make it as easily as possible. High wages, short hours, easy work, and good conditions are beneficial to the workers. In this difference of interests and aim, is the very essence of the natural conflict between the Lumber Trust and the lumber workers. In this, as in all conflicts, the side with the most power will win. The secret of power is Organization. The lumber companies are organized into a powerful trust, and so long as the men remained unorganized, they were at the mercy of the Trust. Who then is to blame for the wretched condition of the lumber workers? No one but the lumber workers themselves; for owing to their unorganized state, they added to the power of the Lumber Trust and made possible the oppression from which they suffered.

To the lumber workers, the miseries of their lives,

their toil, hardships and abuses emphasized their need of organization. How could they organize to best advantage? What kind of a union should they form? There are two principal points to be considered in connection with unions. One is the form of organization—the method of achieving power. The other is the aims and objects to be accomplished by the union—how the power is to be used.

There are three principal forms of organization—craft unionism, mass unionism, and industrial unionism. The principles, aims and objects of a union may be either reactionary or revolutionary.

Let us first consider craft unionism, which is represented in this country by the American Federation of Labor. Instead of uniting the workers in an industry, it separates them into a number of craft, or trade unions, each of these unions being tied up by a separate contract with the employers, and all these contracts expiring at different times, so that when one craft goes on strike, the others in the same industry remain at work, thus making concerted action impossible by dividing the forces of Labor and dissipating their energies.

The A. F. of L. is based on the false theory that the interests of Labor and Capital are identical. If this were true, high wages, short hours, easy work and good conditions, being good for the workers, would also be good for the employers and it would not be necessary to form a union to force them to concede these things. On the other hand, low wages, long hours and hard work being profitable for the employers would also be good for the workers, which is absurd.

The slogan of the A. F. of L. is "a fair day's pay for a fair day's work." This may sound reasonable enough to those who are ignorant of the real nature of the wage system but in reality it means nothing; for who is to

determine what is a fair day's work, and what is a fai
day's pay? Between employers and workers there is
wide difference of opinion on this question. The employe
thinks that a fair day's work means all a worker can pos
sibly do, and that a fair day's pay means just enough t
keep him in working condition. On the other hand, a
intelligent worker knows that all wealth is produced b
Labor and that he is entitled to all he produces. If th
workers got the full product of their labor there woul
be no profits left for the employers. This would mea
the end of the present system of society, which is base
on wages and profits. By adopting this slogan, the A. F
of L. puts itself on record as standing for the perpetuatio
of the present capitalist system, and holds out to th
workers no higher hope than that of being wage slave
forever.

Not only is the form of organization of the A. F. of L
out of date, inefficient and inadaptable to modern indus
try, but it's principles are thoroughly reactionary;
serves to mislead and confuse the workers in the interest
of the employers.

Not all unions affiliated with the A. F. of L. are craf
unions. The United Mine Workers, for instance, is no
divided on the basis of craft, but it is nevertheless organ
ized in such a way as to prevent concerted action on th
part of its members. Instead of separating the workers b
crafts, it separates them by districts, and these district
are tied up by separate contracts expiring at differen
times. When one district is on strike, the rest remain
work. The orders are transferred from the strike distri
to the others, and in this way one district is forced
scab on another.

This is no argument against districts. There is
reason why there should not be districts in a union whe
ever necessary for efficiency and convenience. It is n

the existence of districts in the U. M. W. that prevents solidarity of action but the fact that these districts are tied up by separate contracts.

Mass organization means the organization of all workers together in one union, without regard to the industries in which they work. This form of organization is inefficient and unwieldly. Only the workers in an industry are competent to transact business relating to that industry, but in a mass organization business relating to each industry would be transacted by a confused mass of workers from all industries, meeting together. The Knights of Labor was an example of mass organization and its inadaptability to the conditions of modern industry was one of the reasons for its early disintegration. Besides this the K. of L. was not strictly a working class organization, as it took in many professional and small business men.

Industrial Unionism means the organization of the workers according to industry, on the basis of One Big Union in each industry, without regard to craft or the tools used. This form of organization is represented by the Industrial Workers of the World, which is patterned after the structure of modern industry and the organization of the capitalists who control industry.

The I. W. W. is not only industrial in form, but is revolutionary in character. It is based on the principle that "the working class and the employing class have nothing in common" and "Labor is entitled to all it produces." It is a strictly working class organization, and takes in none but actual wage workers. Its aims are three-fold:

To organize the workers in such a way that they can successfully fight their battles, and advance their interests, in their every day struggle with capitalists.

To overthrow capitalism, and to establish in its place a system of Industrial Democracy.

To carry on production after capitalism shall have been overthrown.

Each industry is dependent on, and inseparably connected with all other industries, the whole forming the complex structure of modern production. The workers in each industry are organized by the capitalists to co-operate with the workers in all other industries, to carry on production. The workers in each industry must organize themselves in such a way that they can co-operate to the best advantage with the workers in all other industries, to stop production whenever necessary in their conflicts with the capitalist class, and to carry on production after the overthrow of capitalism.

The capitalists who control industry are organized into companies, syndicates and trusts, which interlock with one another, the whole being dominated by great combinations of capital, centering in Wall Street, and having their branches all over the world, regardless of national boundary lines and tending more and more towards the formation of one great, world-wide combination of capital. In the same way the workers who carry on production must organize according to the industries in which they work, and consolidate together into one great world-wide combination of labor.

The capitalists are bound together by their business interests regardless of race, color, creed, or sex. So must the workers recognize their community of interests, and unite together in the industries for mutual protection and the advancement of their interests as workers.

All wealth is produced by labor applied to the natural resources of the earth. Under the present system, the earth and its resources and the machinery of production are owned and controlled by capitalists, and the workers

are allowed access to them only on condition that the capitalists can make a profit off their labor. The capitalists do no productive work but live as parasites off the labor of the workers. The wealth produced on the job is divided into two parts; one part goes to the workers in the form of wages which are just sufficient to keep them in working condition; the other, and by far the larger part, goes to the capitalists in the form of profits.

When the workers are unorganized they are at the mercy of the capitalists who deal with them as individuals and can impose on them any conditions they see fit. When the workers are organized they deal collectively with the capitalists and exert some control over the job. They can determine to some extent what the wages, hours and conditions shall be. As their organization grows stronger, their control increases; wages go up, hours are cut down, conditions improve, and profits diminish. Finally a point is reached when the control exerted by the workers becomes stronger than that exerted by the capitalists; then the workers take over the industries, and run them for their own benefit, instead of for the profit of the capitalists.

The I. W. W. is the result of the past experience of the labor movement and has learned from the mistakes of former organizations. The dues and initiation fees are low, to be within reach of all workers. There is a free interchange of cards between all Industrial Unions in the I. W. W. When a worker changes from one industry to another, he can transfer from one union to the other, without expense or inconvenience.

It is against the principles of the I. W. W. to sign contracts with employers. When workers sign an agreement not to strike, they sign away the only weapon they possess. Past experience has shown that employers only respect contracts so long as the workers have power to

enforce them. When the workers have such power, contracts are unnecessary. When they lack power, contracts are useless, for the employers break them whenever it suits their purpose.

The I. W. W. is non-political, for it recognizes that the power of the workers is not on the political, but on the industrial field; and that economic power precedes and determines political power.

CHAPTER IV

Early Struggle for Camp and Sawmill Democracy

Many attempts at organization among the lumber workers have been made with varying success. In 1902 the Western Labor Union, an organization closely allied with the Western Federation of Miners, began to gain a foothold among the lumber workers of Western Montana. In 1905 this organization which had changed its name to the American Labor Union, was one of the unions which went to make up the I. W. W. By that time it had a considerable membership among the lumber workers of Western Montana and the union charter hung in many bunk houses.

In 1907, 1908 and 1909 there were many strikes in Western Montana, but these were only partially successful. In some camps in the neighborhood of Missoula the nine hour day was gained. Much of the output of this section was used to timber the mines of Butte. During the strike of 1908, an appeal was made to the miners of Butte to refuse to handle the timbers cut by scabs. This appeal was turned down by the corrupt clique then in control of the union and that broke the back of the strike.

In order to break up the lumber workers' union, and also to save the faces of the miners from the reputation of using scab timbers, the lumber and copper companies made a deal with the A. F. of L. by which the latter was to invade the territory, and form a new "union" among the lumber workers. With the help of the companies the A. F. of L. lined up foremen, scabs, stools and company spotters. Many men joined this so-called union to hold their jobs. This "union" was completely controlled by the companies, and was looked upon as a joke among the workers. However it was partially successful in breaking

up the then existing union which was considerably weakened by the hard struggles it had come through.

In 1907 two thousand sawmill workers struck in Portland, Oregon, tying up the lumber industry of that city. A minority were organized in the I. W. W. and these were the leading spirits. The strike lasted about three weeks and was broken by the scabbing of the A. F. of L., which at that time was maintaining a lumber workers' organization.

There were still many members of the I. W. W. in the woods of the Northwest but they were scattered here and there, and were unable to make their influence felt to any great extent. However they carried on a constant agitation among their fellow workers on the job, and slowly but surely the idea of the One Big Union began to take hold in the minds of the workers in the sawmills and the camps. Lumber workers' locals were maintained in the principal cities of the Northwest. These locals were a temporary proposition until a sufficient number of workers could be organized to form an Industrial Union.

In Feb. 1912, the lumber workers' locals of the Northwest consolidated and formed a National Industrial Union of Forest and Lumber Workers of the I. W. W., with headquarters in Seattle. About a month later, an unorganized, spontaneous strike started in the sawmills of Aberdeen, Hoquiam and Raymond, Washington, against the ten hour day and the low wages. They demanded a minimum wage of $2.50 for a day of eight hours. A small percentage of the mill workers were members of the I. W. W. and these took an active part in the strike. Many of the loggers of Western Washington struck in sympathy with the sawmill workers and for some weeks a bitter struggle was waged.

On the part of the workers this strike was peaceable and orderly, but the lumber companies employed their

usual tactics of lawless violence. Many of the most active strikers were arrested on flimsy pretexts, or on no pretexts at all, and held for many weeks in the filthy jails of Aberdeen, Hoquiam and Raymond. Many others were brutally slugged and beaten by hired thugs and scab herders. Some were dragged from their beds at night, beaten, deported in automobiles and warned not to return on pain of death.

This strike lasted about five weeks and was partly successful. An increase in wages of about fifty cents a day was gained in the sawmills. The loggers gained the same increase and forced the companies to furnish springs and mattresses and clean up the camps.

In the spring of 1913 a number of strikes broke out in the lumber industry. A big strike of lumber workers was in progress in Louisiana. Early in the spring a strike started in the Coos Bay country, Oregon. This was followed by a strike in Montana, principally effective around Missoula, and caused by an attempt on the part of the lumber companies to force a return to the ten hour day. At Duluth, Minnesota, fifteen hundred men went on strike in the sawmills. In western Washington there was a partial strike. Some results were gained from these strikes. In Montana the strikers were successful in preventing a return to the ten hour day. In other places some increase in wages was gained, and an improvement in food and camp conditions.

After 1913 the sentiment for the I. W. W. continued to grow among the lumber workers although, owing to hard times and unemployment, there was a falling off in membership. To some extent the lumber workers had learned their own power, and what could be accomplished by organized action on the job. The National Industrial Union of Forest and Lumber Workers did not prove a success, and only lasted about a year, but lumber workers

locals were maintained in Spokane, Seattle, Tacoma and Portland. These functioned as centers for propagating the One Big Union idea, by holding meetings and distributing literature.

In the meantime the I. W. W. was making headway in other industries, particularly the Agricultural. In April, 1915, a conference of agricultural workers was held in Kansas City, and the Agricultural Workers' Organization of the I. W. W., at that time known as Local 400, was chartered. The idea was to have One Big Union, with branches, in the agricultural industry, instead of a number of autonomous locals. This organization made great headway among the harvest workers and was very successful in shortening hours, raising wages, and improving conditions. Many thousands of the migratory workers who follow the harvest, joined. Many lumber workers, who made a practice of taking in the harvest, took an active part in building up this union.

At the fall business meeting of the Agricultural Workers' Organization, held in Minneapolis after the harvest was over, it was voted to carry the work of organization into the lumber industry of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Montana, and line up the lumber workers into the A. W. O. until there was a sufficient number organized to start out with a strong Industrial Union of their own.

This plan was put into action with great success. Many of the A. W. O. members went to work in the woods and carried on their agitation with the enthusiasm and aggressiveness generated by their successful battles in the harvest fields. Wages in the woods that fall were very low, ranging from $9 to $25 a month; but to such a degree were they increased in some places, owing to the I. W. W. agitation, that before spring $35 a month were the lowest wages paid, and from that up to $50.

In 1916 the success of the A. W. O. continued and gave a tremendous impetus to organization in other industries. Many men who had dropped out of the I. W. W. came back and entered into the work of organization with renewed hope and energy. The interest of the great mass of the workers, especially in the West, was aroused. They had seen the benefits of Organization demonstrated in a practical way. Many who had formerly sneered at the I. W. W. as a bunch of impractical dreamers, now took out cards and became enthusiastic boosters for industrial unionism.

At the convention held in the fall of 1916, the A. W. O., which by that time had a membership of twenty-two thousand, of whom four to five thousand were lumber workers, voted that the lumber workers organized in the A. W. O. should form an industrial union of their own.

We now go back a few months, to trace the progress of organization in the lumber industry. In February, 1916, Lumber Workers Local No. 315, Spokane, became a branch of the A. W. O., receiving the financial backing of that organization. The following summer a systematic campaign was started to advance the organization among the lumber workers of the Northwest. Many men took out credentials as job delegates. In many camps meetings were openly held, much literature was distributed by the delegates and organizers and branches of the A. W. O. were formed in the principal lumber centers of Eastern Washington, Idaho and Western Montana.

During that summer, fall and winter, thousands of lumber workers lined up in the union. Great enthusiasm prevailed and the bunk houses in the lumber camps nightly resounded with the songs of the I. W. W. The lumber workers had come to realize that if their condition was ever to be improved, they themselves must take action; and that the One Big Union offered the only effective

weapon to break the tyrannical rule of the Lumber Trust.

The same was true, only to a less extent, in the great lumber region of Western Washington. The lumber workers' locals in this section did not become branches of the A. W. O., but continued as autonomous locals. Discontent was rife among the loggers and sawmill workers and they were beginning to look to the One Big Union as the solution of their economic problems.

Much opposition was encountered from the lumber barons and their tools. In Everett, the Commercial Club, terrified at the prospect of the I. W. W. gaining a foothold in the sawmills and camps, abandoned all pretense of law and order. With the help of a servile and cowardly mayor and sheriff, it organized a band of vigilantes consisting of business men, scabs, pimps, and other degenerates, for the purpose of driving the I. W. W. out of town. During the summer and fall of 1916, many men were forcibly and illegally deported, beaten, jailed, and subjected to the vilest and most barbarous kind of abuse by this collection of thugs, in a mad campaign of violence and lawlessness which culminated Nov. 5th in the infamous Everett massacre in which five members of the I. W. W. were murdered, and many others wounded.

In spite of all opposition, the work of organization went on, and in the spring of 1917 hundreds of lumber workers were lined up in the I. W. W. and the idea of the One Big Union was rapidly gaining headway among the thousands of workers in the camps and sawmills of Western Washington.

In the meantime, the lumber barons and other capitalists of the Northwest, alarmed at the growing power of the organization, were digging themselves in, and preparing for the coming battle. Evidently, they realized the weakness of their position, and the inadequacy of the weapons they had formerly used to hold labor in subjec-

tion. The lockout and the blacklist, violence, mob rule, thuggery and murder had failed to stop the onward march of industrial unionism. Some new means had to be devised to stop the onrushing tide of working class power. There was no mistaking the handwriting on the wall. If the One Big Union was allowed to go ahead it would soon control the industries of the entire country, which would mean the end of capitalist profit. Something had to be done at once to stop the One Big Union movement, and crush the I. W. W. out of existence. To accomplish this purpose, the "Criminal Syndicalism" laws were passed. The following is a copy of the first of these laws, which was passed by the state legislature of Idaho:

SESSION LAWS

Idaho, 1917

Page 459—Chapter 145

Senate Bill No. 183

An act defining the Crime of Criminal Syndicalism, and prescribing punishment therefor.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho.

Section 1. Criminal Syndicalism is the doctrine which advocates crime, sabotage, violence, or unlawful methods of terrorism as a means of accomplishing industrial or political reform. The advocacy of such doctrine, whether by word of mouth or writing, is a felony punishable as in this act otherwise provided.

Section 2. Any person who, by word of mouth or writing, advocates or teaches the duty, necessity, or propriety of crime, sabotage, violence, or other unlawful methods of terrorism as a means of accomplishing industrial or political reforms, or

(2) Prints, publishes, edits, issues, or knowingly circulates, sells, distributes or publicly displays any book, paper, document, or other written matter in any form containing or advocating, advising or teaching the doctrine that industrial or political reform should be brought about by crime, sabotage, violence, or other unlawful methods of terrorism, or

(3) Openly, wilfully, and deliberately justifies by word of mouth or writing, the commission or the attempt to commit crime, sabotage, violence, or other unlawful methods of terrorism, with intent to exemplify, spread, or advocate the propriety of the doctrine of criminal syndicalism, or

(4) Organizes or helps to organize, or becomes a member of, or voluntarily assembles with any society, group, or assemblage of persons, formed to teach or advocate the doctrines of criminal syndicalism,

Is guilty of a felony, punishable by imprisonment in the state prison, for not more than ten years, or by a fine of not more than five thousand dollars, or both.

Section 3. Whenever two or more persons assemble for the purpose of advocating or teaching the doctrine of criminal syndicalism as defined in this act, such assemblage is unlawful, and every person voluntarily participating therein by his presence, aid, or instigation, is guilty of a felony, and punishable by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than ten years, or by a fine of not more than five thousand dollars, or both.

Section 4. The owner, agent, superintendent, janitor, caretaker, or occupant of any place, building or room, who wilfully and knowingly permits therein, any assemblage of persons prohibited by the provisions of Section 3 of this act, or who after notification that the premises are so used, permits such use to continue, is guilty of a misdeameanor, punishable by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than one year, or by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars, or both.

Approved March 14th, 1917.

April 13th, 1917, a criminal syndicalism law was approved in Minnesota.

February 21st, 1918, a criminal syndicalism law was approved in Montana.

Since that time, similar laws have been passed in a number of other states. These laws are all practically the same, although they differ slightly in wording.

It is rather hard to understand how these laws apply to the I. W. W., as that organization is neither criminal,

nor does it represent syndicalism, which is an European movement widely different from the I. W. W. The I. W. W. has never advocated crime, violence, or any methods of terrorism, either lawful or unlawful; yet these laws were passed for the express purpose of outlawing the I. W. W., and putting it out of existence. How successful they have been we shall see later.

CHAPTER V

The Lumber Workers' Struggle for Freedom, and the Lumber Trusts' Struggle for Profits

March the 5th and 6th, 1917, a lumber workers convention was held in Spokane, for the purpose of forming an industrial union in the lumber industry. This convention was composed of thirteen delegates representing all the A. W. O. branches in Eastern Washington, Idaho, and Western Montana, thenceforth known as the Spokane district; two delegates representing the organized lumber workers of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, the Middle West district; and two representing Nos. 432 of Seattle, and 338 of Tacoma. Lumber Workers Industrial Union No. 500 was launched, with a membership of about ten thousand who had lined up in the A. W. O. The new Union was soon afterwards joined by the lumber workers' locals of Western Washington and Oregon, which became the Seattle district.

At this convention, pursuant to the instructions from the membership, arrangements were made for calling a strike in the Spokane district the following summer, the exact date to be determined by the organization committee, contingent on circumstances. Demands were drawn up, calling for an eight hour day; a minimum wage of $60 a month and board; springs, mattresses, and bedding to be furnished by the companies; shower baths and drying rooms, and an all around improvement of conditions in the camps; abolition of the hospital fee; and that all men be hired from the Union Hall. A special demand of $5.00 for a day of eight hours, was made for the river drivers, and it was agreed that a strike should be called on each river as soon as the drive started.

In some parts of the Northwest the logs are floated

long distances down river from the woods to the sawmills. These drives start in the spring as soon as the melting snow from the mountains makes sufficient water in the rivers. About the middle of April the drives started, and one by one they were tied up by strikes. Some of these strikes were successful, all demands being won. Others were long drawn out and bitterly contested, the companies trying to get the work done by scabs, and the strikers maintaining pickets on the rivers as long as the drives lasted. The usual strike breaking tactics were employed by the companies. Gunmen patrolled the rivers. Stool pigeons attempted their work of disruption from within the ranks. Strikers were arrested and jailed. Lying stories of riot and anarchy by the strikers were spread by the press. In some places troops were brought in for the purpose of intimidation. But in spite of all opposition the strikers remained firm; and in nearly all cases in which the demands were not granted the greater part of the logs remained up river when the water went down.

June 1st the organization committee of the Lumber Workers Industrial Union held a meeting at which it was decided to carry out instructions of the March convention, by calling a strike of all the lumber workers of the Spokane district for July 1st. By that time about eight-five per cent of the lumberjacks in that district were organized, also a small percentage of the sawmill workers. Sentiment for a strike was good. Many small walkouts had occurred, msot of them over the food.

June the 15th a strike started over the food, in one of the camps of the Humbird Lumber Co. near Sand Point, Idaho. The other Humbird camps followed, and in a few days all the camps in the neighborhood of Sand Point were out, and the strike was rapidly spreading to other lumber centers. In view of this situation, the

officials of L. W. I. U. decided not to wait till July 1st, but to call the strike at once. June the 20th the strike call was sent out. In response to this call, the power of the organized lumber workers was demonstrated beyond all question. The men left the woods in thousands and in a short time practically all the camps in Eastern Washington, Idaho and Montana were shut down and the lumber industry of the short log country was paralyzed.

Any camps that were slow to come out were visited by committees of the strikers, and in nearly all cases, when the workers realized the extent of the strike, and the great possibilities involved, they were easily persuaded to quit work. Strike camps were formed and the entire strike zone was covered by a network of picket lines. In each camp committees were chosen to carry on the work of picketing and attend to the various duties of conducting the strike. A representative of each branch was sent to Spokane to act on the central strike committee.

A few camps made an attempt to operate with scabs, but they were shorthanded, and the scabs were inefficient. The result, measured in production of logs, was negligible.

Several small outfits offered to accede to all the strikers' demands if they would return to work. The pros and cons of this proposition were thoroly thrashed out at the strikers' meetings, and the question was finally put to a referendum. It was voted down by a large majority. The prevailing opinion was that this was a scheme to cause a division among the strikers, by some of the companies temporarily giving in to the demands and getting the men back to work, and in this way getting enough logs to keep some of the mills running, and fill the most pressing orders for all the companies affected by the strike. This would enable the companies, against which the strike was still in force, to hold out indefinitely.

Then when the strike was broken, and the lumber workers were forced back on the job defeated, the companies that had acceeded to the demands would take back all they had granted, and force the former conditions back on the men. It was pointed out that this scheme had been worked successfully by the employers on the striking longshoremen of the Pacific Coast in 1916. The strikers recognized that they were not fighting a lot of separate, individual companies, but an organized trust. It was agreed that no separate settlements would be made with any of the companies, and when the strikers returned, they would all go back as they had struck, together.

Appeals for funds and subscription lists were sent out from the head office in Spokane, to all other I. W. W. unions and branches in the United States, and to many other unions, radical societies, and individuals. Every day the mails brought in contributions, and every day funds were sent out to the strike camps. No great amount of money ever accumulated at the head office for as fast as it came in it was sent out. Most of the contributions were for small amounts, but there were many of them.

This was a good example of the way I. W. W. strikes are financed. It has often been argued against the I. W. W., that it has no large treasury, and therefore is incapable of carrying on strikes successfully. In reply, we point to the lumber workers' strike and the copper miners' strike of 1917, the strike of the iron miners on the Mesaba Range in 1916, the Lawrence strike of 1912, the Patterson silk workers' strike, and there are many other similar cases. The strength of the I. W. W. does not lie in the size of its treasury, but in the soundness of its principles, and the solidarity of its membership.

It is impossible for a capitalist court to tie up the funds of the I. W. W. by an injunction, or to confiscate them by a fine, as was done in the cases of the Danbury

Hatters, and the United Mine Workers, for the I. W. strike funds are beyond the reach of courts and injunctions, being in the pockets of the workers all over the continent.

Special strike stamps were issued by the L. W. I. U., and these were actively pushed by the delegates of the other industrial unions, especially among the agricultural workers in the harvest fields. Much money was raised by the strikers themselves. As soon as they left the job, collections were taken up. In some of the strike camps enough money was raised to keep them supplied without calling on the head office.

After the strike was called the health authorities of Idaho had a surprising awakening. They actually discovered that the sanitary conditions in the camps were not all that could be desired. Inspectors were sent to the camps. These expressed horror at the conditions they found and ordered the camps cleaned up immediately. Although these same unsanitary conditions had existed for years, they had never before disturbed the peaceful slumbers of the State Board of Health; which goes to prove that no action is ever taken on behalf of the workers until they take action themselves—and then only to placate them from taking further action.

The summer of 1917 was an exceptionally dry one and, as always happens during a dry summer, there were many forest fires. Many of the strikers went fighting fire, and rendered invaluable services, often at the risk of their lives. The sworn testimony of government officials will show, that had it not been for the willing and efficient services rendered by the strikers, a great part of the forests of the Northwest would have been totally ruined. Men not familiar with the work in the woods, are not only practically useless as fire fighters, but work at great danger to themselves. To fight fire effectively requires

lumberjacks—men who understand the work. Had the striking lumberjacks refused to fight fire, millions of dollars worth of the best timber in the Northwest would have gone up in smoke.

At Missoula, Montana, the fire fighters were hired from the I. W. W. hall, nearly all the fire fighting gangs had I. W. W. men as foremen, and the U. S. fire warden repeatedly stated that the I. W. W.s were the most efficient and reliable men he had.

When the strike became general some of the sawmill crews walked out and special demands for sawmill workers were drawn up. This was the case at Bonner, Montana, and Elk River, Idaho. At the latter place, the business men of the town demonstrated their servility by scabbing in the mill. After the strike had gone on for some time most of the sawmills had to shut down for want of logs.

In the meantime all the poisonous venom of the capitalist press was turned loose on the strikers. A campaign of lies, slander, and abuse, was daily carried on. Stories of the most absurd nature were circulated, in an attempt to turn public opinion against the strikers. Accusations were made that the strike was instigated and financed by German agents, to obstruct the U. S. government in the conduct of the war, and to hinder the manufacture o aeroplanes by stopping the production of spruce, and that $100,000 a month was received at strike headquarters, from the Kaiser. Frantic appeals to patriotism were made, and the strikers were branded as undesirable citizens, public enemies and traitors.

Besides carrying on this insidious propaganda to influence public opinion, the companies endeavored to create a reign of terror by instituting a "government of gunmen"; these low and degenerate characters infested all the camps, and did everything in their power to harrass and annoy the strikers, while spies and secret agents at-

tempted to cause dissention and disruption within the ranks. But the strikers remained firm. Determined and resolute men carried on the work of picketing, and a close watch was kept on all employment offices in the Northwest. In the strike camps, order and discipline prevailed, in spite of all attempts of company stools to stir up trouble.

Owing to the wide area covered by the strike, the large number of men involved, and the vigilance of the pickets, it was impossible for the lumber companies to recruit a sufficient number of scabs to run the camps, despite their most strenuous efforts. Finding all attempts to break the ranks of the strikers unsuccessful, the companies resorted to the usual tactics of Big Business in such cases. The press, acting as the mouthpiece of the Lumber Trust, began to make insistent demands for martial law in the strike zone.

Governor Alexander of Idaho was not in favor of calling for troops, for he claimed that the strike could be broken by means of the existing machinery of civil government. To accomplish this purpose he made a personal tour of all the strike camps in Idaho. Accompanied by the sheriff of the county, he would visit a camp, and make a talk to the strikers, appealing to their patriotism, and trying to impress upon them that it was their duty to work for the industrial Kaisers of the Lumber Trust, at starvation wages, and under inhuman conditions, in order to expedite the war against the political autocracy of the German Kaiser. In other words they should submit to autocracy in Idaho, in order to crush autocracy in Germany, and show their patriotism by going back to work under the old unspeakable conditions, in order to give their industrial masters a chance to show theirs by profiteering at the expense of the government, on a scale

before undreamed of, even in their philosophy of the survival of the slickest.

The logic of this reasoning did not impress the strikers very deeply; but brute force and not logic is what the lumber trust has always relied on to keep its employes in subjection. As soon as the governor had taken his departure, the sheriff and his deputies would raid the camp and arrest the most active of the strikers. In St. Maries and Sand Point, Idaho, the union halls were closed and many arrests were made. At Bonner's Ferry, Idaho, the hall was closed and the strikers run out of town by an armed mob of citizens led by the sheriff. At Whitefish, Montana, the hall was closed by soldiers, and a bonfire made of the furniture and supplies. In many other places strikers were arrested and jailed on flimsy charges or on no charges at all. As fast as the men were arrested, others took their places on the picket line. At St. Maries and Moscow, Idaho, "bull pens" were built, and in each of these about forty of the strikers were held on charges of "Criminal Syndicalism." All over the strike district hundreds were lying in the filthy jails, and every day more arrests were made.

At Elk River, Idaho, a number of strikers were working as section men on the railroad, when they were arrested, tried in a company controlled court and sentenced to jail for "vagrancy." At Bovil, Idaho, some of the strikers who had rented a house were forcibly evicted by Lumber Trust gunmen, in spite of the protest of the proprietor.

Near the end of July there occurred at Troy, Montana, an incident of shocking barbarity. A man named Frank Thornton was arrested in a saloon, after a quarrel with the bartender, and the constable took him to the jail, a small wooden structure. Bystanders who witnessed the arrest stated that two Lumber Trust gunmen followed

them, and the sound of blows was heard coming from the jail, as if they were giving Thornton a terrible beating. That night the jail was burned and Thornton, the only prisoner, was burned in it.

It was thought by some that Thornton was beaten to death by the constable and gunmen on the afternoon of his arrest, and that the jail was purposely set on fire to cover up the crime. Others claimed that while the jail was burning, they could see Thornton writhing in agony among the flames. This much is certain: the jail was burned, and either Thornton or his dead body burned with it.

Thornton was beaten to death or burned alive in the jail, and the authorities who arrested him and put him in that jail, are responsible for his death. To imprison a man in a firetrap of that kind, and leave him without any possible chance of escape in case of fire, is in itself a criminal act, and is absolutely inexcusable.

There are thousands of these wooden firetrap jails in this country, and many men have met a fate similar to that of Thornton, but because they are working men without money or influence, little publicity has ever been given these atrocities.

To enumerate all the instances of violence and lawlessness practiced on the strikers by Lumber Trust gunmen and subservient officers of the law would fill a large volume. All this hounding, persecuting, arresting, beating and jailing could not break the strike, or crush the undaunted spirit of the strikers. Every fresh outrage only seemed to increase their determination; as fast as pickets were arrested, others took their places, and as the week dragged along the fight was carried on with intensified bitterness. The lumber industry remained paralyzed. As the Lumber Trust governor of Idaho said

"the camps were as quiet as the graveyard and the main thing was to get them started up again."

In Washington the state of affairs was as bad as that in Idaho and Montana. Troops were brought into the Yakima Valley, and a systematic attempt was made to drive all members of the I. W. W. out of that part of the country. At North Yakima, Wenatchee, Pasco, Leavenworth, Cle Elum, and Ellensburg, hundreds of men were arrested and held in jails and "bull pens" for being members or suspected of membership in the I. W. W. No one who looked like a working man was safe from arrest. Men were arrested on the streets of these towns, while peacably attending to their own affairs. If, on being searched, they were found in possession of I. W. W. cards, they were thrown into jail or "bull pen" and there held without trial or "due process of the law," in some cases for months. Passenger trains passing through these towns, were boarded and searched by soldiers, and any passengers suspected of being members of the I. W. W. were taken off and put in jail.

The treatment received by these men in the jails and "bull pens" would disgrace any country in the world having the slightest pretention to civilization. They barely received sufficient food to keep them alive, and what little they did get was totally unfit for human use. For protesting against this treatment they were bulldozed, insulted, and in some cases brutally beaten by the soldiers. Many of these men on being released, presented the appearance of living skeletons, and were scarcely recognized by their friends, to such a condition had they been reduced by starvation and abuse.

Attempts were made to have these men released by habeas corpus proceedings, but without success. At Pasco the judge turned down the writ on the grounds that the state of Washington was in a "state of insur-

rection". At North Yakima the two men named in the writ were turned loose just before the case was to come into court, thus preventing the making of a test case.

There is reason to believe that this reign of terror in the Yakima Valley was caused partly with the object of preventing any of the striking lumberjacks from obtaining work harvesting in that part of the country.

While this industrial war was raging in the short log country, the lumber workers of Western Washington were watching developements, and making active preparations to join the strike. In this section about twenty per cent of the loggers were organized in the L. W. I. U., and the majority of the unorganized were favorably inclined towards the union. Among the sawmill workers, owing to unfavorable conditions, organization had made comparatively little headway. Many were strongly in favor of the L. W. I. U. but, for reasons previously mentioned, were deterred from joining. A few belonged to an A. F. of L. organization known as the International Union of Timberworkers which was closely allied to the shingle weavers union and which, owing to its reactionary character, did not meet with such strong opposition from the lumber companies.

Sentiment for a strike was good. Many of the lumber workers realized this was an opportunity for bettering their conditions which they could not afford to let pass. The demand for lumber was good, especially for long timber for shipbuilding and, owing to the strike in the short log country, the lumber workers of Western Washington were practically in control of the situation. It is customary in this section for the mills and camps to shut down July 1st, and remain closed from one to two weeks, to overhaul machinery and make repairs. Consequently nothing could be gained by striking before operations were resumed after the holidays.

Early in July a convention of delegates representing the organized lumber workers in all parts of Western Washington was held in Seattle. A strike was voted, this being the instructions given the delegates by the membership. July 16th the strike call was sent out. The result was practically the same as in the Spokane district. Great activity was displayed by the organized minority, and in a short time ninety per cent of the lumber industry of Western Washington was at a stand still. Owing to the different nature of the work in the long log country, different demands were drawn up, but the eight hour day was the paramount issue.

Never before had the lumber barons been confronted with such a situation, and to judge by the frantic wails of the press, they were at a loss what to do. They claimed it was impossible to grant the eight hour day owing to competition of the South, where ten hours was the work day in the lumber industry, and wages were much lower than in the Northwest. The usual charges of disloyalty and pro-Germanism were made by the newspapers, and it was charged that the object of the strike was to stop production of spruce lumber which was needed for the manufacture of aeroplanes for the war; and to cut off the supply of lumber from the wooden shipyards, which were working on government orders. As a matter of fact the production of spruce was very little interferred with by the strike, as most of the spruce timber grows in Oregon and was unaffected by the strike.

As an example of the patriotism of the Lumber Trust, it is interesting to note in passing, that according to the figures printed in the "Spokane Press," before the United States entered the war, the price of spruce was $16 a thousand feet, while a few months later, owing to the demand for spruce for aeroplanes, the price rose to $116 a thousand feet. Subsequent investigations by Congress

throw additional light on the profiteering of the Lumber Trust.

The following is from the "Seattle Union Record" of July 5, 1919:

WASHINGTON, July 14.—Charges of waste and profiteering in the production of spruce from Pacific forests, for army biplanes, were ready for presentation to the House committee investigating War Department expenditures, by the Providence (R. I.) Journal today.

Affidavits were prepared purporting to show that under the deperament's cost-plus plan, the government paid $650 a thousand feet for spruce which private concerns could buy for $130 to $178 a thousand.

Other charges prepared by the Journal were: Hundreds of miles of two inch plank road were built into isolated forests, and never used.

Food supplies were carelessly thrown into a mudhole, and stoves were left in the open and ruined.

Lumber interests influenced army officers by "wild parties".

Out of 21,000 feet of spruce delivered to a Massachusetts factory, inspectors only passed 400 feet.

Several camps were started with large numbers of men and then suddenly abandoned.

If any one was guilty of disloyalty so far as the shipyards were concerned, it was the lumber companies by reason of their refusal to sacrifice a small part of their profits, and end the deadlock, by granting the demands of the strikers, the most important of which was the eight-hour day, which had long ago been adopted for all government employes. By a sophistry of avarice the Lumber Trust sought to prove that an eight-hour day, while legal for government employes, was treason when demanded by lumber workers. Secretary of War Baker specially requested the lumber barons to grant the eight-hour day, and was refused. This refusal places the blame of disloyalty squarely on the shoulders of the lumber barons themselves.

The strike on the coast was conducted in much the same manner as in the short log country. The same order and discipline prevailed among the strikers. They showed the same energy, enthusiasm, and determination to win. The same methods of violence and lawlessness were employed by the companies, and the same use was made of subservient public officials and corrupt courts.

The usual attempts were made to hoodwink and double cross the strikers. The press constantly spread reports that the strike was broken, and that the strikers were returning to work. Ambitious politicians in the guise of mediators, and members of state councils of defense, ostensibly acting from patriotic motives, displayed great diligence in acting as mouthpieces of the Lumber Trust. Stripped of their high sounding protestations of friendship for the strikers, the object of these would-be mediators was to end the strike, and get the strikers back on the job as soon as possible, and at the easiest possible terms for the Lumber Trust.

Some of these political fakirs made the proposal that the strikers should return to work to finish all government contracts, and then, the following January, when the rush of work was over, a conference was to be held at which the lumber barons would condescend to consider granting the eight-hour day. Then the press reported that the strikers had accepted this "offer" and were returning to work. This the strikers treated as a joke.

Another proposal emanating from a like source, was that the eight-hour day should be granted, the strikers to accept a reduction of wages from ten to nine hours pay. Owing to the rapidly rising cost of living the strikers had found it hard enough to live on ten hours pay, and this proposition was treated with the contempt that it deserved.

In Oregon the percentage of organized lumber work-

ers was small. When the strike started, slight hopes were entertained of making it effective in that state. After the strike had tied up Western Washington the lumber companies transferred some of their orders to the Columbia River district in Oregon. This caused a strike of nearly all the loggers in that section. Most of the sawmills in Portland and Astoria were shut down, either by direct strikes or by shortage of logs, caused by the tie-up in the woods. However, the percentage of organized workers was too small, and the strike only lasted from one to two weeks.

The profiteering magnates of the Oregon lumber centers, fearing the spread of the strike, resorted to the "unlawful methods of terrorism" commonly used by the Lumber Trust, to prevent the union from gaining a foothold.

At La Grande, Oregon the L. W. I. U. Hall was closed by the city authorities, and the secretary arrested, held several days, and then ordered out of town. Organizers were arrested, forcibly put on trains, and threatened with lynching if they returned.

At Bend, Oregon a mob raided the union hall at night, destroyed furniture and supplies, and ran the delegate out of town.

At Klamath Falls, Oregon, there was a reign of terror similiar to that of Everett the previous summer. A mob ruled the town. Committees of vigilantes "arrested" all suspected union men at work in the neighboring camps, and jailed them on charges of vagrancy. Forty members of the I. W. W. were held in jail, in constant danger of lynching by the mob. A lawyer who went from Portland to defend these men, was seized as soon as he reached town and threatened with drowning if he did not leave at once. The leaders of the mob openly declared they would allow no lawyer to defend the I. W. W. pris-

oners. They threatened to hang half of them and drown the other half.

Meantime the strikers in Eastern Washington, Idaho and Montana continued their struggle. In spite of arrests and all other attempts to intimidate them, the men stuck to the picket lines, and the deadlock continued. Day by day the press became more violent, abusive, and mendacious. Mob violence against the strikers was openly advocated, and martial law was insistently demanded. Big business brought constant pressure to bear on the city government of Spokane to make them close the headquarters of the L. W. I. U. They hoped by that means to cut off the strike funds and starve the strikers back to work. At the street meetings of the strikers held nightly at Spokane, two government stenographers took down every word uttered by the speakers, in the hope that they might let fall some remark that might be interpreted as "seditious." The other tenants of the Lyndall Block, a large office building in which the L. W. I. U. headquarters were located, doubtless acting under pressure from big business, notified the landlord that they would all move out if he allowed the L. W. I. U. office to remain.

By means of threats and intimidation, attempts were made to prevent any other landlord from renting to the I. W. W. but, after considerable trouble, office room was secured in another building, and the office continued to function without interruption.

In order to force the City of Spokane to close the I. W. W. offices and drive the organization out of town, the business men of Idaho instituted a boycott against the Spokane wholesalers. The lumber workers retaliated by boycotting the retail merchants of Idaho. Many of these servile lackeys of the lumber trust were entirely

dependent on the lumber workers' trade for a living, and they learned by bitter and costly experience that it is not always a good policy to bite the hand that feeds them.

The Spokane city administration held many meetings to devise means of dealing with the strike situation. There were conferences with state and national officials. There was much talk of the necessity of using drastic action to end the strike, as a measure of public safety in war time. It is significant that these political office holders, in dealing with the problems presented by the strike, seemed to consider the solution to lie in forcing the strikers back on the job, rather than in forcing the lumber barons to concede the demands of the strikers, which were perfectly just and reasonable, as was recognized by Secretary of War Baker. They looked at the situation from the viewpoint of the employers instead of that of the strikers or of disinterested neutrals.

It is difficult to understand how public safety could be promoted by forcing thousands of useful workers back to inhuman conditions, at starvation wages, in order to protect the profits of a few social parasites. Careful consideration of all the circumstances, forces the conclusion that politicians and government officials were more concerned about the profits of the business interests than the safety of the country.

August 19th the Spokane hall and offices of the I. W. W. were closed by the military authorities. All office fixtures and supplies were seized, and the officials and all members who happened to be in the hall at the time were arrested and taken to the county jail. Closing the office caused considerable inconvenience but did not discourage the strikers in the least; on the contrary it only increased their tenacity. Cutting off the funds from

headquarters only caused redoubled efforts to raise money in other ways, and the strike continued unbroken. Other men took the places of the men arrested, and in a few days new offices were opened.

CHAPTER VI

The Job Strike

For some time an idea had been gaining headway among the strikers; that it was time to make use of new tactics, that they had stayed off the job long enough, and that it was time to get back to the camps and mills, and carry the strike with them. Many had been opposed to a long drawn out strike, from the first, and had advocated an early return to the job, and the use of the job strike. As the strike progressed, the wisdom of these tactics became more apparent. The advocates of this idea, showed that prolonged strikes were seldom successful, that they had a tendency to exhaust and discourage the strikers, and resulted in weakening and sometimes breaking up the unions; that it was time to abandon antiquated methods of fighting the boss, and put into practice the methods and tactics long advocated by the I. W. W. It was pointed out that to stay away from the job too long, would leave it open to the scabs, and in time the bosses would gather enough scabs to run the camps again; that the weak kneed among the strikers would go back to work when the pressure became too severe, and thus the strike would fizzle out, and the union might have a hard time in surviving.

These men advocated that the strike should be transferred to the job while the union was still intact, and the fighting spirit of the men unsubdued; or in other words, that the strikers should go back, and work no more than eight hours a day, or if at times they found it necessary to stay on the job ten hours, they should work slow so that no more than eight hours work should be done in ten hours. They advocated poor work for poor pay, poor food and poor conditions. It was argued that the

object of a strike was to cut down the profits of the boss, and this could be done just as effectively, or even more so, by using job tactics. With the job strike, instead of starving on the picket line, the strikers would be eating three meals a day, at the expense of the boss, and drawing their pay besides. This tactic eliminated the scabs, for if any were on the job when the strikers returned, they would undoubtedly find it unpleasant to make a prolonged stay.

At the strikers' meetings the question was much discussed. Some thought that by staying off the job a little longer, they could force the Lumber Trust to make a settlement. Others had been fighting fire, and had considerable money, and were in favor of staying out. Many failed to understand the difference between transferring the strike to the job and calling off the strike, and thought going back on the job was the admission of defeat.

The Seattle district put the proposition to a referendum, and voted to go back on the job. In the Spokane district a referendum was impossible, for the lines of communication had been disorganized by the jailing and persecution of the men in the picket camps. Meetings were held wherever possible, the question was thoroughly discussed, and, after a good deal of debate, it was decided to go back on the job, and there continue the strike.

About the middle of September the movement back to the job started. At that time, the strike in the Seattle district had lasted about two months, and that in the Spokane district nearly three months. The return movement was hailed by the press as a victory for the Lumber Trust. On the contrary, it was only the beginning of a new, and far more effective form of strike. Later the Lumber Trust was to grasp defeat out of the

jaws of it's supposed victory. The tactics employed to break the strike, instead of discouraging the strikers, had only aroused their fighting spirit. Their minds were disabused of any illusions they might have had about the "identity of interests" between labor and capital, "constitutional rights", "equality before the law", and all similar high-sounding but meaningless bunk. They were smarting under a burning sense of injustice. The mask of hypocracy had been torn off, and press, courts, legislatures, officers of the law, and politicians were all plainly shown to be nothing but the tools of big business. They had learned from experience that a working man had no "rights" under the present capitalist system, except such as his organized power can maintain.

When the strikers returned to the job, instead of doing a day's work as formerly, they would "hoosier up", that is, work like green farmer boys who had never seen the woods before. Perhaps they would refuse to work more than eight hours, or perhaps stay on the job ten hours, for a few days, killing time. When they had a few days pay, they agreed among themselves to work eight hours and then quit. At four o'clock some one would blow the whistle on the donkey engine, or at some other pre-arranged signal, they would all quit work and go to camp. The usual result of this was that the whole crew would be discharged. In a few days the boss would get a new crew, and they would use the same tactics. Meantime the first crew was repeating the performance in some other camp. When a boss had a crew, he got practically no work out of them, and what little he did get, was done in a way that was the reverse of profitable. A foreman always thought he had the worst crew in the world, until he got the next. The job strikers achieved the height of inefficiency on the job, while

retaining their usual efficiency in the cook house at meal times.

In most camps the job strike was varied at times by the intermittent strike, the men walking off the job without warning, and going to work in other camps. This added to the confusion of the bosses, as they never knew what to expect.

These tactics had never been used on such an extensive scale in the United States. The companies could not meet them. All over the Northwest the lumber industry was in a state of disorganization and chaos. There was no hope of breaking this kind of a strike by starvation; much against their will the companies were forced to run the commissary department of the strike.

It was no longer necessary to call on the working class to contribute their hard earned dollars to the support of the strikers. Job strikes are not financed by the workers but by the companies against whom they are directed.

With the strikers on the picket line, many schemes were devised to get into the camps, which were closely guarded by gunmen, and try to persuade the scabs to quit. Now the strikers were in the camps and the scabs were gone. The "authorities" could arrest the pickets and send them to jail on trumped up charges, with the object of intimidating the strikers from picketing. But the strikers on the job were practically safe from arrest, for it was impossible to arrest them all, and there was no way of telling which ones were the most active.

In a few cases, men who were thought to be the leading spirits, were arrested in the camps, but this only added fuel to the flames of discontent and resentment, and its effect on the production of logs was anything but encouraging to the companies.

It might be supposed that under these circumstances the companies would resort to a general lockout; but they were unable to do this, as there was an active demand for lumber at the time, and their reserve supply was practically exhausted, owing to the long strike off the job.

This state of affairs lasted all winter. If the lumber barons had any hopes that the men would tire of the job strike, they were doomed to disappointment, for a job strike can be carried on for an indefinite length of time. At one time during the winter, at a meeting of the Western Pine Manufacturers Association, held in Spokane, it was decided to concede the eight-hour day, to take effect January 1st. It was later announced that this action had been rescinded. It seems there was a disagreement among the different lumber companies. Those hit hardest by the strike were in favor of granting the eight-hour day, while the opposition came from those whose holdings lay outside the strike zone, principally in Oregon. This was an encouraging sign to the strikers, for it showed lack of harmony in the camp of the enemy—lack of solidarity in the One Big Union of the bosses.

CHAPTER VII

Victory, but not the Final Victory

Shortly after the strike was transferred to the job, the government placed Colonel Disque, with headquarters in Portland, Oregon, in charge of spruce production. Although the production of spruce was little interfered with by the strike, the lumber companies purposely held it back, to discredit the strikers and make it appear that they were striking against the government, and to force it to aid in breaking the strike.

With the purpose of breaking up and displacing the L. W. I. U., Colonel Disque started the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen. Recent investigations of its activities show that to the lumbermen the 4-L.'s meant Little Loyalty and Large Loot. Army officers, adept in terrorism, with no gentlemanly scruples to hold them from any nefarious design, acted as organizers. Frequently they visited the camps, and all who refused to join the L. L. L. L. were accused of being spies, pro-Germans and traitors, and were usually fired off the job and beaten by soldiers. In one case, a man who had the temerity to speak against the L. L. L. L., was found dead next morning, hanging from the limb of a tree.

Railway stations in the lumber regions were closely watched by the soldiers, and all men coming in to look for work were searched. By these methods the L. L. L. L. succeeded in gaining a membership of some thousands before spring; but they failed to break up the L. W. I. U., or to stop the strike on the job. Forcing men to join an organization, does not change their principles. A man may wear the L. L. L. L. button and still play the "hoosier" on the job.

Colonel Disque put soldiers to work in the camps, ostensibly to aid in spruce production; but as soldiers were placed in many camps where not a stick of spruce was produced, it is evident that the real object was to break the strike. The companies took advantage of the position of these soldiers, to exploit them to the limit, paying them practically no wages, and keeping them in a state of chronic starvation, the food being unfit to eat. If they rebelled it was mutiny. Naturally they used the only available weapon—the slow down system.

Colonel Disque and the lumber barons finally began to realize that they were up against a method of fighting in which they were hopelessly outclassed. Every method before successful in breaking strikes, had been tried and failed. There remained only one thing to do —to concede the eight-hour day. March the first, 1918, after official announcement by Colonel Disque on behalf of the lumber barons, the eight-hour day was recognized in the lumber industry of the Northwest.

The strike was over. The organized power of the lumber workers had won against one of the most powerful combinations of capital in the world. Two hours had been cut from the work day, wages had been raised, and conditions in the camps improved one hundred per cent. The lumber barons claimed they had granted the eight-hour day "voluntarily,—for patriotic reasons". In reality they had granted nothing. All they had done was to give the eight-hour day their official recognition, after it had been taken by the direct action of the lumber workers themselves. There was nothing else they could do. The L. L. L. L. also claimed the credit. However it is well know that the L. L. L. L. was formed, not to win, but to break strikes, and to displace a genuine organization in the lumber industry. It has failed to accomplish either of these two purposes.

It is now over two years since the beginning of the 1917 lumber workers strike, and the prospects for the I. W. W. never looked so bright.

Taking advantage of the inflamed and hysterical state of public opinion during the war, the capitalists of the United States, and particularly the Lumber Trust, carried on a relentless campaign of persecution against the organization. Some of the most active members were murdered. Many were convicted under the criminal syndicalism laws and received sentences of from one to ten years in the penitentiary; most of these cases were in Idaho. Some were convicted under the Espionage Act, and given sentences varying from one to twenty years in the Federal penitentiaries. Members have been held in filthy county jails for nearly two years without trial. Others were deported; scores were tarred and feathered; hundreds were beaten up by mobs; and thousands were jailed. Criminal syndicalism laws were passed in many states. Nearly all I. W. W. Halls in the country were raided and closed; officials were arrested, and furniture and supplies were seized. Of all the venomous hatred with which privilege fights all that challenges its rule, the I. W. W. was the victim. It was misrepresented, vilified, abused and outraged. Thus capitalism paid tribute to its fear of an organized working class. The members were denied the most elementary rights. The masters were willing to commit any crime; from false imprisonment to murder, to kill the I. W. W. But the I. W. W. was not killed. The necessity for its existence is too firmly rooted in the present order of society. Today it is advancing toward its goal with renewed strength, and carrying on the work of educating and organizing the workers, with undiminished energy. It has demonstrated its fitness to survive, by it's ability to dispense with halls, and carry on its activities on the job. At the pres-

ent time, the L. W. I. U. has a larger membership in the Northwest than ever before. It has shown what can be accomplished by a suitable form of organization, and up to date tactics.

What has been done in the Northwest, can be done by the lumber workers in other parts of the country. The lumber workers of the Northwest have started on the right track—the road of **Job Organization** that leads to power and freedom. The L. W. I. U. is now firmly established in the Northwest. There must be no slacking of efforts, until every camp and sawmill in that section is one hundred per cent organized. But that is not enough. The lumber workers of the Northwest cannot stand alone, no matter how strongly they are organized. The organized workers of one section of an industry cannot successfully fight the organized capitalists of the entire industry. It is quite conceivable that in the event of another strike, especially in slack times, the Lumber Trust might resort to a general lockout in the Northwest; shut down every camp and saw mill in that entire section, for an indefinite period, and transfer their orders to other sections. The L. W. I. U. must carry the fight into all the lumber regions on this cortinent. It must attack the Lumber Trust in all its strongholds. The lumber workers of the East, and those of the great lumber regions of the South, must be organized. The fight must be to a finish. There is no room for compromise. The organized lumber workers must break the power of the Lumber Trust, or the Lumber Trust will smash the Lumber Workers Industrial Union, or else render it harmless. With this aim, the hired brains of the Lumber Trust are working continuously. They will fight organization both from the outside and from the inside. When the capitalists cannot smash a union, they try to control and transform it into

a tool to hold the workers in subjection. Capitalists and their tools are more dangerous when they try to make "friendly" advances, than when they openly fight us. The best defense is aggression. The control of the lumber industry must be taken out of the hands of a group of ruthless twentieth century pirates. It must be taken over by the workers who produce all the wealth in the industry, and who alone are entitled to its benefits.

The organized lumber workers of the Northwest are fighting the common enemy. All lumber workers, both organized and unorganized are benefited by their struggle. No man worthy of the name, wants to enjoy the benefits secured by organization without doing his share of the fighting. As long as the unorganized lumber workers remain in their present state, they are not only failing in their duty to fight against the tyranny of the Lumber Trust, but are allowing themselves to be used against their organized fellow workers. There is no neutral ground. The supine inertia of the unorganized gives the Lumber Trust it's power, and enables it to resist the efforts of the organized minority. When the organized workers go on strike, the orders are transferred to a locality where the workers are not organized. In this way the unorganized, perhaps unconsciously, play the part of strike breakers. Even when there is no strike, the tendency is for the Lumber Trust to curtail production as much as possible where the union is strong, and speed up where it is weak or non-existent, thus transferring the work from the higher paid to the lower paid men.

One of the most effective methods yet devised to break up unionism is contract or gypo work—a form of piece work. By doing piece work, a man may, by means of extra hard work, make more than he can by the day. But by so doing he is furthering a scheme to

break the union, and put himself once more at the mercy of the bosses. Suppose he does twice as much as the average day worker, he throws another man out of a job. If all lumber workers double their output, one half the number would be needed. The other half would be unemployed. This would increase the competition for jobs. Wages would go down and a man would have to speed up to the limit to hold a job. All the benefits gained by unionism would be lost. The workers would be worse off than ever.

By taking a short sighted view, a man thinks the harder he works on a contract, the more money he makes. This may hold good for a short time, but in the long run, the exact opposite is true. When the bosses see a man making much more than the average wages, they cut the piece rate. Soon the gypo finds himself working for the same wage he got by the day, or less, and working twice as hard.

Although a piece worker may make more in a day than a day worker, he gets less for an equal amount of work—a smaller percentage of the wealth he produces. Even the conservative craft unions discourage piece work by every means in their power. They have learned by experience that it invariably results in speeding up, throwing workers out of employment, and cutting down wages.

The slow down strike is one of the most effective weapons the workers can use. By doing piece work a man puts himself in a position where it is impossible to use this weapon.

As far as the practical results of his work are concerned, there is no difference between a piece worker and a scab.

The same argument applies to the bonus system.

Speeding up is equally injurious, whether on piece work or day work.

There can be no peace as long as the Lumber Trust remains in control of the industry. United action by the lumber workers alone can break the hold of these usurpers. It is up to every man to do his part. The time has come for the lumber workers in all parts of the continent, governing their actions by common sense and intelligent self-interest, to unite together in one great industrial union, for immediate improvement in hours, wages and conditions, always keeping in view, and striving towards, the final goal—control of the lumber industry.

THE END.

A Job

The mule psychology of the oats-aspiring animal is clearly demonstrated when Block meets Block. Whenever two of the species meet after being separated for some time you can always bet your life that the first question is about a job. They make a great Hallelujah when they have one. These working animals accept degradation with a satisfied grin. Not only are they satisfied with a job, but they are also thankful for the privilege of slaving their lives away to make a heaven on earth for profiteers. A job means everything to Mr. Block. It looks so valuable to him, because it is so uncertain. He may get fired any minute. When this happens it is a big calamity. The happy grin disappears because the oats are cut short, the stomach starts preaching a serious sermon. Give to a Block the privilege to slave and he is in heaven. He doesn't ask for the good things of life and of civilization. He is satisfied with belly-stuffing. This is practically all that the millions of workers receive in return for the creation of all wealth. Progressive workers demand the full product of their labor, the fruits of civilization.

Ernest Riebe.

Political Bunk

The profiteers are very resourceful in buncoing Mr. Block. Election day is dedicated especially to Mr. Block and his family. They put up a bunch of foxy spell binders, label them democrats, republicans, or what not. Then the Block-show is pulled off. The different fakers call each other all kinds of bad names; they have no honor. After election they wine and dine together. The show lasts for months and Mr. Block and his relations enjoy it immensely. The politicians promise meat and the Blocks forget all about liberty steak. If a spellbinder wishes to make a special hit he calls Mr. Block an intelligent sovereign citizen. The dunce almost croaks; he's tickled to death at this. After election he finds out that the wonderful promises are not kept. Election promises are made to be broken. The politician out of office informs Mr. Block that he elected the wrong kind of a fellow. Mr. Block swears revenge to be taken next election when the traitor will be thrown out. Next election it is the same old sham battle again. Only the faces of the fakers are different and some have a bigger belly than others. The assortment of lies and fake issues are also different, to fool Mr. Block more easily.

Ernest Riebe.

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